NWCC Predictive Services Fire Behavior Outlook

FORECAST VALID FOR: **July 19 to July 25, 2016**	**DATE/TIME ISSUED: July 19, 2016, 09:00**
NEXT UPDATE: July 25, 2016	**Mike Powell, NWCC Fire Analyst**

This is a general fire behavior outlook covering the entire Northwest Geographic Area. It is intended to provide wildland fire managers with an overall view of fire behavior potential and to help wildland firefighters with making informed decisions and maintaining situational awareness based on current and expected fire behavior. Firefighters must use onsite observations and spot weather forecasts to calculate site-specific fire behavior for individual wildland fires.

A Fuels and Fire Behavior Advisory has been issued for Southeast Oregon based on heavy fine fuel load and low live woody fuel moisture. Access the Advisory at the link below:

http://www.predictiveservices.nifc.gov/fuels_fire-danger/GB_Fuels_and_Fire_Behavior_Advisory_07072016.pdf

Fire Weather Summary:

There will be showery weather with thunderstorms and heavy rains through Thursday followed by a weak high pressure system finally bringing in summertime weather for the weekend. Precipitation has been limited to the west side and the mountains of the east side. Lower elevations on the east side should receive very little if any precipitation. Southeast Oregon is expected to miss all of this weather and remain warm and very dry. Winds will increase on Thursday as a low pressure system moves across the area. The combination of winds and thunderstorms Thursday will increase the probability for problem fires.

Fuel Conditions

As of Tuesday (7/19/16) fuels were more moist than normal across most of the geographic area with Southeast Oregon at normal dryness for this time of season. Areas that do not get showers will slowly dry through Thursday. As high pressure moves in, all areas will continue their drying trend.

Grasses on the east side are cured in lower elevations and drier sites and in some stage of curing to mid-elevations. Most east side units are reporting higher than average grass loading. On the west side grasses are mostly green with some curing with the exception of Southern Oregon where grasses are cured at lower elevations. Shrub moistures in Southeast Oregon are at critical dryness levels at this time and some locations are reporting record dryness for this time of season. Other areas, shrub moisture is on the decline, but near normal dryness for this time of season. Dead fuels are near normal conditions for this time of year, but are expected to dry somewhat rapidly with any warming conditions. Foliar moisture in timber is likely drier than normal due to the early snow melt off.

Fire Behavior Potential

Fire behavior potential will be greatest in the southeast and decline to the north and west. Breezy conditions will support large rangeland fires on the east side at the lower to mid-elevations. In Southeast Oregon the combination of more continuous grasses and shrub moisture below critical levels will support extreme fire behavior with rapid rates of spread. Fire behavior potential on the east slopes of the Cascades, the Blue Mountains and the Siskiyou Mountains will increase during the week with problem fires more likely. Increased potential for torching, group torching and small crown runs are likely in these areas due to the early melt off of the snow pack. Low fire potential exists on the west side north of the Umpqua Divide and in the northeast Washington Mountains.

Westside PSAs
Low fire potential is expected except in Southern Oregon. Grasses have re-greened and are now curing in most locations but are fully cured in southern Oregon. Dead fuels currently wetter than normal for this time of season but are expected to dry to near normal with slightly above normal dryness in southern Oregon. A slight increase in crown involvement is possible due to the early snow melt, and torching and small crown runs are likely in the mountains in Southern Oregon. Conditions will dry rapidly this weekend.

Central PSAs
Areas that receive precipitation will show low to moderate fire behavior through the week. Timber fuels are becoming available to burn in areas that do not receive precipitation. Southerly aspects are more likely to present situations where control problems are likely. Areas with bitterbrush understory will burn at moderate to high intensities with torching and group torching common with small crown runs. Rangeland fuels are available to burn to elevations around 3,500 feet in northern areas and around 4,500 feet in southern areas. Shrubs are near normal dryness for this time of season but will contribute to fire intensity to some extent. Wind driven rangeland fires are likely. Conditions will dry rapidly this weekend.

Eastside PSAs
Areas that receive precipitation will show low to moderate fire behavior through the week. Timber fuels are becoming available to burn in areas that do not receive precipitation. Southerly aspects are more likely to present situations where control problems are likely. Areas with bitterbrush understory will burn at moderate to high intensities with torching, group torching and small crown runs. Fuel is moister in northern areas and drier farther south. Low to moderate fire behavior is likely in the northeast Washington with moderate to high fire behavior in the southernmost areas. Shrubs in Southeast Oregon are at critical dryness levels and will contribute to fire intensity and spread. Rangeland fuels are available to burn to elevations around 3,000 feet in northern areas and around 4,500 feet in southern areas. Wind driven rangeland fires are likely. Conditions will dry rapidly this weekend.

ALWAYS BASE ACTIONS ON CURRENT AND EXPECTED FIRE BEHAVIOR GIVEN THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS IN YOUR LOCAL AREA. MAINTAIN SITUATIONAL AWARENESS FOR CHANGING CONDITIONS AS YOU CHANGE LOCATIONS (FUEL, WEATHER, AND TOPOGRAPHY). REMAIN VIGILANT FOR FACTORS THAT ALIGN TO PRODUCE CRITICAL FIRE ENVIRONMENTS (THUNDERSTORMS, FINE FLASHY FUELS, SLOPE…).